



Hurricane Ike rapid needs assessment - Houston, Texas, September 2008

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Abstract:

On the morning of September 13, 2008, Hurricane Ike made landfall on the upper Texas Gulf coast at Galveston Island as a category 2 storm, with hurricane force winds extending 125 miles from its center. As the storm continued through nearby Houston and surrounding areas, it caused power blackouts for more than 3 million households. In Houston, city services were disrupted for weeks, officials declared nightly curfews, and supplies of bottled water, ice, electrical generators, and gasoline became scarce. At least five deaths were associated with carbon monoxide asphyxiation from improper use of generators in homes. During September 18-19, 2008, the Houston Department of Health and Human Services conducted a rapid needs assessment to gauge the prevalence of injuries and health complaints, determine immediate needs for health-care and medical supplies, and provide assessment information to those responsible for postdisaster response management and intervention. This report describes the assessment, which found that services to residents were disrupted longer and more extensively than anticipated, and that the greatest need among surveyed households was for assistance obtaining food (26.8%). The results suggest the need to prepare communities at risk for hurricanes for longer than the commonly anticipated 3-5 day recovery period. These findings also highlight the importance of rapid assessments of health and basic needs in such areas, even when communities sustain little structural loss and few injuries. Responders should prepare to support such areas that might experience health-related effects exacerbated by protracted recovery periods.

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Resource Description

Exposure :

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Extreme Weather Event

Extreme Weather Event: Hurricanes/Cyclones

Geographic Feature:

resource focuses on specific type of geography

Ocean/Coastal, Urban

Geographic Location:

Climate Change and Human Health Literature Portal

resource focuses on specific location

United States

Health Impact:

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

General Health Impact

Medical Community Engagement:

resource focus on how the medical community discusses or acts to address health impacts of climate change

A focus of content

Mitigation/Adaptation:

mitigation or adaptation strategy is a focus of resource

Adaptation

Population of Concern: A focus of content

Population of Concern:

populations at particular risk or vulnerability to climate change impacts

Children, Elderly

Resource Type:

format or standard characteristic of resource

Research Article

Resilience:

capacity of an individual, community, or institution to dynamically and effectively respond or adapt to shifting climate impact circumstances while continuing to function

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Timescale:

time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified

Vulnerability/Impact Assessment:

resource focus on process of identifying, quantifying, and prioritizing vulnerabilities in a system

A focus of content